

**Testimony by:  
Katherine Knoll  
Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition  
Senate Health Policy Committee  
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Chairman George and members of the committee, my name is Katherine Knoll and I am here today on behalf of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan coalition to express our support for Senate Bill 365. Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan's 110 organizational members are committed to advocating for policies that promote healthy weight in Michigan's children. In that light, we strongly support SB 365 and urge your passage of this important legislation.

The national rates of childhood obesity have tripled in the past 3 decades and Michigan, as you know, has not escaped from this epidemic. In fact, 2007 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that Michigan is in the top fifth of states in the prevalence of adult obesity.

This is an especially important public health threat to focus on as our state, and nation, struggle to balance budgets, reform health and health care, and look to improve our citizens' quality of life. Nationally, over \$117 billion dollars is spent each year on the management of obesity-related medical problems. Michigan's share is approximately \$2.9 billion.

As you know, virtually every organ and system in the body is affected by obesity and medical management has largely proven ineffective in dealing with this condition. Our best available option is to focus on prevention obesity in the first place. SB 365 helps put our focus on preventing obesity in our youth.

Childhood obesity prevention is a shared priority of 110 organizations that came together over 18 months to develop a 'consensus' childhood obesity agenda. This prevention-

based policy agenda is being promoted by those organizations and the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan coalition has been formed around it.

Members of this committee will recall that in previous legislative sessions, this committee requested the Department of Community Health to develop just such an agenda. With funding from the National Governor's Association, and based on the understanding that our agenda needed to balance the responsibility for action across multiple sectors, MDCH and the Surgeon General, Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, convened a transdisciplinary group of leaders to fulfill this request.

One of our coalition's six priorities is reflected in Senate Bill 365. The other five include two regulatory and administrative changes to Medicaid and the Michigan Care Improvement Registry, an already enacted policy of providing tax incentives to grocers supplying healthy food to underserved communities, and two priorities yet to be introduced designed to improve coordinated school health efforts and to promote physical activity through transportation planning and practices. Together these six priorities address critical obesity prevention policy gaps and make the important point that all sectors have a role to play in addressing the childhood obesity epidemic.

Information on the entire consensus agenda, as well as a list of the organizations endorsing it, is submitted as part of my testimony.

We believe the language contained in Senate Bill 365 reflects the fact that much of what health and physical education advocates would wish for is not fiscally or politically feasible at this time. However, we believe this legislation is a great step forward and this policy builds on the current practices of schools. As an example, the Michigan Department of Education data indicates that the majority of districts around the state are already going to be in compliance with this policy if it becomes law.

Senate Bill 365 is a key part of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Childhood Obesity Prevention Consensus Agenda. Senate Bill 365 represents an agreeable, albeit incremental approach, to improving the requirements for Health and Physical Education.

Thank you for your time today.